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**REMARKS**

Claims 1-20 are pending. Reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks is requested.

**I. The Rejection of Claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103**

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Pieroni et al., WO 99/37746. The Examiner states:

Applicant argues that Pieroni et al., WO 99/37746, discloses that adjunct ingredients, including antioxidants, are added to their composition in amounts from 30-99.9% by weight, which is much higher than the 0.2-5% by weight range of the antioxidant component required in the instant claims. However, the examiner respectfully disagrees with applicant's analysis of Pieroni et al., WO 99/37746. Specifically, the examiner asserts that page 77, lines 21-31 of Pieroni et al., WO 99/37746, discloses that the adjunct ingredients, such as antioxidants, surfactants and hydrotropes, are included in their art-established levels of use, wherein the total amount of all the adjunct materials is 30-99.9% by weight. Therefore, the examiner asserts that Pieroni et al. does not teach that the antioxidant component is used in an amount of at least 30% by weight, but rather the aggregate of all the adjunct ingredients used in the composition is at least 30% by weight. Furthermore, the examiner asserts that the teaching of the art-established level of antioxidants of Pieroni et al. would encompass the presently claimed range of 0.2-5% by weight, as evidenced by the prior art of record.

This rejection is respectfully traversed. The claims are directed to a granule that comprises a core matrix and one or more coatings, in which the core comprises (a) an active compound; (b) a synthetic polymer in an amount of 0.1 to 10 % by weight of the core matrix; and an (c) antioxidant or reducing agent in an amount of 0.2 to 5 % by weight of the core matrix.

The amount of the antioxidant or reducing agent recited in the claims is very important to the advantages provided by the claimed invention and the ingredients when used in the recited amounts provide a surprising stabilizing effect. However, when the antioxidant or reducing agent used is in an amount below 0.2% by weight of the core matrix, the combination of the antioxidant or reducing agent and the synthetic polymer did not result in significant stabilization. See the specification at page 8, line 11. Moreover, when the antioxidant or reducing agent used is in an amount above 5% by weight of the core matrix, negative effects can result, e.g., problems in high humidity environments. See the specification at page 8, line 11-20. The range of 0.2 to 5 % by weight of the core matrix is therefore critical.

Pieroni et al. does not teach or even suggest that the antioxidant or reducing agent should be used in the recited amount, rather Pieroni et al. discloses that the adjunct materials should be used in an amount of 30-99.9% by weight. The Examiner alleges, however, that Pieroni et al. teaches that it is the aggregate of the adjunct ingredients which is what makes up the total amount of 30-99.9% by weight, and hence, that the antioxidants can be in a lower amount. However, it is respectfully submitted that even if true, this still does not amount to a teaching or suggestion of the critical amount of the antioxidant or reducing agent that should be used in the active containing granules. In particular, Pieroni et al. does not provide any teaching or suggestion to use a synthetic polymer in an amount of 0.1 to 10 % by weight of the core matrix in combination with and an antioxidant or reducing agent in an amount of 0.2 to 5 % by weight of the core matrix, and that such composition will provide stabilizing effects.

The Examiner further relies on "the teaching of the art-established level of antioxidants of Pieroni et al would encompass the presently claimed range of 0.2-5% by weight, as evidenced by the prior art of record." As the amount of the antioxidant or reducing agent is an important feature of the claimed invention, as explained above, it is necessary to review and address the evidence that the amount recited in the claims is "art-established." Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to point out where this teaching is found in the prior art of record. The McGoff et al. reference was previously established not to be prior art. Also, if this alleged teaching is based on evidence not of record, the Examiner is respectfully requested to provide evidentiary support for this statement as the amount Applicant. See MPEP 2144.03.

Nevertheless, the Examiner has also not established where there is a motivation to combine this specific "art-established" amount of an antioxidant or reducing agent with the recited synthetic polymer in the core matrix. In this regard, Pieroni et al. is directed to multi-layered detergent tablet, which is different from the active containing granule of the present invention. The active containing granule of the present invention can be used in a detergent composition, but it is not the detergent composition (tablet) of Pieroni et al. In this regard, the composition and amount of ingredients of the detergent tablet of Pieroni et al. is not instructive of the composition and amount of ingredients of the active containing granule of the claimed invention, and therefore the "art established" amounts for a detergent tablet would be different from "art established" amounts of the active containing granules of the present invention. This further supports the need to explore the evidence the Examiner is relying upon for the statement that the amount of antioxidant or reducing agents recited in the claims is "art established."

Nevertheless, even assuming that the unidentified prior art teaches the use of an antioxidant or reducing agent in an amount that "encompasses" some portion of the range of 0.2 to 5 % by weight of the core matrix, there is still not any teaching provided of this specific critical range (.2 to 5 % by weight of the core matrix) or of the relation of this amount of antioxidant or reducing agent to and in combination with a synthetic polymer in an amount of 0.1 to 10 % by weight of the core matrix.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has not made a *prima facie* showing of obviousness as there is no teaching or suggestion provided to use an antioxidant or reducing agent in the recited amount and in combination with a synthetic polymer. In addition, as the amount of the antioxidant or reducing agent is critical, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide support of the statement that this amount is an "art-established level."

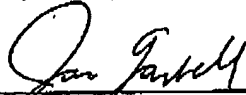
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the claims overcome this rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

## II. Conclusion

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance. Early action to that end is respectfully requested. The Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if there are any questions concerning this amendment or application.

Respectfully submitted,

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